

# 'Tranquility in the Wilderness'

by Deborah Stone  
Staff Writer

John Kinssies believes he has a God-given talent that is meant to be shared with others. His gift is to create artistic displays with water features that replicate what he sees in nature. The Redmond man, who owns Kinssies Landscaping in Woodinville, spends much of his free time hiking, camping and fishing throughout the Pacific Northwest.

"I love the outdoors," comments Kinssies. "And there are so many beautiful places in our region to explore. When I'm out there, I'm inspired by all that beauty and the ideas just come to me."

Kinssies' company, which was founded in 1987, is a full-service business, offering maintenance, design and installation. But, its specialty is unique, one-of-a-kind, natural water features. At last month's Northwest Flower and Garden Show, Kinssies' display, "Tranquility in the Wilderness" drew rave reviews and earned a gold medal award. It was also touted at the Arboretum Gala Preview, where it won the People's Choice Award. And Kinssies' peers recognized his work with the Fred Palmer Award. "I was thrilled with all the attention my display



Staff photo/Ian Gieadle

"Tranquility in the Wilderness" was created by Kinssies Landscaping.

got," admits Kinssies, "and it was very emotional for me to receive all these awards. They mean so much to me, as they provide real validation for what I do. Plus, the recognition is a great boost to my business. The phones have been ringing off the hook."

"Tranquility in the Wilderness" was a re-creation of a high Alpine setting and contained such elements as a large waterfall, fire pit, backpack set, fly rod and a pond with real trout swimming in it. Rich in color and texture, the display featured a gorgeous one hundred year old, ten-foot tall Japanese maple tree, along with a mix of evergreen and deciduous wilderness plants

and moss and twisted, gnarly snags. "I created it to make you feel like you're coming up on a camp site," explains Kinssies. "There was a path that meandered through the display and even though you were in the middle of this large convention hall, you felt that you were somewhere in the mountains. This is the type of thing I strive for—to transport people to nature." Visitors to the show constantly remarked on Kinssies' scene, stopping in their tracks to stare, mouth agape, at it. "They would tell me how amazing it was and how it made them feel," adds Kinssies, "and I could tell that I had really succeeded in achieving that 'wow' factor."

Prior to the show, the Redmond man had spent much time hiking through the Alpine Lakes Wilderness area, visiting over thirty waterfalls, to get his water feature just right. Though it took three and a half days to set up the display, he says it involved a year's time of basically creating the scene in his mind. "I don't sketch anything out or put my ideas down on paper," he comments. "I see it all in my head." Kinssies foray into the field of landscaping began when he was fifteen and mowed lawns for folks in his neighborhood. He made flyers and stuck them in people's doors, advertising his services. His business grew and expanded over the years, as did his reputation for highly professional work with an artistic flair.

"I love the business," remarks Kinssies. "It's my therapy and I consider myself very fortunate to get paid for something that I'm passionate about and that makes me feel so good."

As for next year's show, Kinssies says, "No, I'm going to wait a few years before entering again. I already have an idea though and it's going to top what I did this year in a big way. It's going to be unbelievably amazing. Just wait!"